Royalty Registration Playbook (South Africa Edition)

This is a step-by-step execution plan to ensure every song you release is structured as a long-term income-generating asset.

Use this playbook before, during, and after every release.

PHASE 1: LOCK IN OWNERSHIP (BEFORE YOU UPLOAD ANYTHING)

Step 1: Finalize Splits Immediately After Creation

The moment the song is finished:

- Confirm who wrote what (lyrics, hook, melody, production)
- Agree on percentage splits
- Ensure total equals 100%
- Document everything in writing

Action:

☐ Split sheet completed

☐ All contributors signed

☐ Digital copy stored safely

Why this matters: If splits are unclear, you cannot correctly register with SAMRO or CAPASSO. Incorrect splits delay payments and create disputes.

Step 2: Clarify Publishing Structure

Decide:

- Are you self-published?
- Do you have a publishing admin?
- Is a producer claiming publishing?

Action:

☐ Publishing ownership confirmed

☐ Publisher name consistent across all platforms

Mistake to avoid: Registering different publishing information across distributor and PRO systems.

PHASE 2: PREPARE THE MASTER RECORDING

Step 3: Secure Your ISRC

Every master recording needs a unique ISRC.

Action:

☐ ISRC generated (via distributor or label code)

☐ ISRC stored in master records

☐ ISRC matches final audio file

Why this matters: ISRC tracks the master globally. Without it, tracking and payments break down.

Step 4: Upload With Accurate Metadata

Before submitting to your distributor:

- Double-check spelling of artist names
- Ensure composer names match legal registrations
- Confirm genre and release details

Action:

☐ All credits entered accurately

☐ Release date confirmed

☐ Contributor roles assigned correctly

Small spelling differences can split royalties across multiple profiles.

PHASE 3: ACTIVATE MASTER-SIDE INCOME

Step 5: Distribution Setup

Action:

☐ Distributor selected

☐ ISRC correctly assigned in dashboard

☐ Revenue split settings confirmed (if applicable)

Outcome: Streaming and download revenue is activated.

Step 6: Register for Neighboring Rights (Performer Income)

If you performed on the track:

Action:

☐ Registered with SAMPRA as performer

☐ Performer details up to date

☐ Track declared if required

Why this matters: You earn additional income when your master is played publicly (radio, retail, commercial environments).

PHASE 4: ACTIVATE PUBLISHING INCOME

This is where most artists fail.

Step 7: Register as a Composer

Action:

☐ Registered with SAMRO

☐ Member number secured

Without this, performance royalties cannot be paid.

Step 8: Register the Song With SAMRO

Do this before or immediately after release.

Action:

☐ Song title matches distributor metadata

☐ Writer splits match signed split sheet

☐ Publisher information entered correctly

Outcome: Performance royalties (radio, live, streaming) activated.

Step 9: Register With CAPASSO (Mechanical Royalties)

Action:

☐ Registered as rights holder

☐ Work registered with accurate splits

☐ Details aligned with SAMRO submission

Outcome: Mechanical royalties (digital reproductions and certain international income) activated.

Step 10: Confirm International Collection Strategy

If your music streams outside South Africa:

Option A: Rely on reciprocal agreements via SAMRO/CAPASSO. Option B: Use a publishing administrator for global collection.

Action:

☐ International collection method chosen

☐ Admin agreement reviewed (if applicable)

☐ Catalog registered internationally (if required)

Forward-thinking move: As your catalog grows, international collection becomes more important than local airplay.

PHASE 5: RELEASE WEEK AUDIT

Within 7 days of release:

☐ Spotify/Apple profiles display correct artist name

☐ Song credits visible and accurate

☐ ISRC matches distributor records

☐ Publishing splits aligned across systems

Fix errors immediately. Early corrections prevent long-term reporting issues.

PHASE 6: MONITOR & VERIFY (3–6 MONTHS AFTER RELEASE)

Royalty reporting is delayed. Monitoring is essential.

Action:

☐ Distributor royalty statement reviewed

☐ SAMRO statement checked

☐ CAPASSO report reviewed

☐ SAMPRA statement monitored (if eligible)

If payments are missing:

   • Cross-check ISRC

• Verify split registration
• Confirm metadata consistency

PHASE 7: CATALOG MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Professional artists treat data like assets.

Maintain a structured folder containing:

  • Signed split sheets
  • ISRC codes
  • Registration confirmations
  • Publishing agreements
  • Banking confirmations

Annual review:

☐ Confirm contact details are current

☐ Confirm banking details are accurate

☐ Audit catalog registrations

FINAL CONTROL QUESTION

Before moving on from a release, ask:

"If this song goes viral tomorrow, is every income stream properly activated?"

If the answer is yes, the song is not just released — it is structurally positioned to generate income long-term.